

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims**

1.-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a quartz glass slab ingot comprising the steps of:

providing a rotatable furnace having a feeder at a top portion thereof;

dropping silica powder around the center of a furnace bed in the rotatable furnace through the feeder;

fusing the silica powder in the rotatable furnace;

depositing the fused silica at the center of the furnace bed; and

extending the fused silica deposit outwardly from the center of the furnace bed by heating and rotating the furnace, wherein the atmosphere in the furnace has a hydrogen/oxygen gas ratio of from 2.1 to 2.5.

21. (New) The method of Claim 20, additionally comprising the step of depositing zirconia particles having a diameter of 2 to 10 nm on the surface of the furnace bed prior to dropping the silica powder onto the furnace bed.

22. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein raw material is fed to the furnace at a rate of from 1.0 to 10 kg/hr.

23. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein said ingot has the shape of a column.

24. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein said ingot has the shape of a solid round bar.

25. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein said ingot has the shape of a plate.